



Naming “Ministers of Reconnection”

Objective(s): To find “Ministers of Reconnection” in the congregation.

Time

Commitment: 30 minutes

Group Size: Congregation

Needed: Paper and pens/pencils for every member of the gathering

Preparation:

Process:

1. Introduction to *why* we are doing this: “As a congregation, we understand that we have a responsibility to care for each other, and for others in God’s world. Part of our story is that there have been people with whom we have lost touch. A plan is coming together to find out if the people we’ve lost touch with still have – or still want – a connection with this faith community. With such an important task at hand, we need to do some thinking about how – and who – can help us to ask these questions.”
2. Take a moment to listen carefully to this scenario: You and your spouse have been active members of the congregation for a long time. You first started coming when your children were small, and you kind of ‘grew with them’ as they learned. Well... now they’ve headed off to college and university and work – lives of their own. As time has passed, the two of you have kind of ‘fallen away’ from congregational life. Ok – have you got your head there? Then listen...
3. Take one of the pieces of paper in front of you, and write “Scenario ONE” on the top. Now, take a moment to write your responses to the following questions. One day, someone from the congregation shows up on your doorstep, and says, “Hi, there! We’ve been missing you, and are wondering how you are doing?” Who from the congregation would you want that person to be? What relationship do you have with that person (eg. Elder, minister, friend, family member, etc.)? What are the gifts or skills that they have that would make them the best person to show up and chat? You can name more than one person, if you would like. (*Give people time to respond to all of the questions.*)
4. Take a moment to listen carefully to this scenario: Church has just finished. You have left worship, absolutely and completely furious. As you walk through the door of your house, you announce to the world, “I am **never** stepping back into that building again... at least as long as that *idiot* is the minister there!” You look out the window, and see someone from the church getting out of their car. When you answer the door, they look at you and say, “I had the feeling that you were pretty upset when you left the church. Would you like to talk about what happened?”
5. Take one of the pieces of paper in front of you, and write “Scenario TWO” at the top. Now – take a moment to answer the following questions. Who from the congregation would you want to show up and ask the question? What relationship do you have with them (eg. Elder, minister, friend, family member, etc.)? What are the gifts or skills that that person has that would make them the best one to show up and chat? You can name more than one person, if you would like. (*Give people time to respond to all of the questions.*)
6. Gather up the response sheets and invite the congregation to prayer – for people from our congregation who are feeling like those in the scenarios, for the people in our congregation who have been named as having gifts that could help in such situations, and give thanks for all whose lives have been touched through Christ’s ministry through this congregation.
7. Contact those named by the congregation, inviting them to come to a gathering to discuss the Ministry of Reconnection. Let them know that the congregation had seen in them God-given gifts for such a ministry and ask them to consider if they would be willing to be a “Minister of Reconnection” with those with whom the congregation had lost touch over the last while.

An explanation of how this workshop worked in one congregation
was first printed in *The United Church of Canada’s*
Exchange magazine – Fall 2003 issue: “A Ministry of Reconnection” by Richard Bott,
and reprinted in Reginald Bibby’s *Restless Churches*.